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ABSTRACT

An ideal secondary level remedial reading program would be based on the philosophy that both freedom and structure are required, that learning demands involvement and feedback, and that success breeds success. Such programs should be structured (i.e., based on clearly defined content and a clearly designated mode of presentation). There are many structured reading programs available to teachers, and recent research studies testify to the value of structure. Ideal remedial reading programs should also involve students actively in the learning process. Tutoring is an important approach to increasing academic engaged time (the time students spend engaged in academically relevant materials), and reports of peer-tutoring sessions show how this approach provides for student involvement and responsibility. Finally, ideal programs should be based on an atmosphere of acceptance that permits students to experience success and feel positive about their reading. With regard to content and materials, an ideal program plans for a balanced content of vocabulary development, comprehension skill development, and free reading growth with specific, measurable objectives and well-defined methods. (The paper includes an example of a peer-tutoring spelling sheet and presents three models for an instructional week.) (GW)

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AN IDEAL REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM

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I am very thankful for the opportunity today to outline the characteristics of an ideal remedial reading program. Too often are we all shackled to the realities of students, daily needs, and daily crises. Seldom if ever is it possible to free ourselves from the bonds that hold us and fly freely and unencumbered amidst educational dreams. Today I will provide a look, an overview, of what a remedial reading program could look like--your program and mine-if we had the energy, the support and the knowledge of how it "could be." Ms. Newton, who will respond to my paper, will bring us all back to reality, but for the next few moments, let us idealize, let us optimize, let us dream.

In the midst of the dreaming, however, I will root suggested approaches and methods in the objective realities of research findings and the practical realities of experience. Another aspect to keep in mind is that remedial reading programs are like potatoes. Potatoes are not the main course of a meal; rather they complement the main course. In the same manner, remedial reading programs constitute essential components of a school reading program, but are not the main course; rather, they must function as a complement to the entire school reading program. Thus a necessary ingredient in any remedial reading program is the public relations aspect such that remedial programs are accepted, welcomed and used by the entire school staff, not just the reading team. In addition, clear, precise, and explicit entrance and exit policies are needed that are consistent with the social and political context of the school. These criteria need to be the result of concensus among the entire instructional staff, although they should reflect the philosophy of the reading staff.

My main focus today will be the characteristics of effective instructional settings and materials. As mentioned already, I will base my remarks on research findings and authority. I will also depend on my own personal biases. (All teachers have some of these, as you well know.) By the way, I will identify some of these as biases, and others you shall have to detect yourself.

I shall begin by briefly describing the philosophy underlying this ideal remedial reading program. The philosophy has three recurring emphases. They are 1) that success breeds success, 2) that both freedom and structure are required (Rogers, 1969), and 3) that learning demands involvement and feedback (Gagne, 1970). The first emphasis means simply that students will develop their own motivation to repeat tasks at which they are successful. Just as young children will climb up and down stairs hundred of times when they first discover that they can do it; so even secondary remedial students who discover the confidence of reading by themselves will practice reading with enjoyment. The second point builds on the Rogerian belief that learning occurs as a result of choice. I like to add the restriction that teachers must structure those choices within a suitable environment. The third emphasis reiterates the generally accepted educational belief that a learning experience does not occur unless the person receives information as to the accuracy of his new learning.

I turn now to the actual description of the program. It will proceed in three parts. The first section describes the program as it reflects three characteristics: structure, involvement, and acceptance. The second section addresses the issues of instruction and materials, and the third outlines possible models for an instructional week.

Let us begin with the element of <u>structure</u>. When first considering the characteristic of structure, I felt it was a relatively simple concept. A structured program, I thought, meant a planned program of instruction. Yet, while reviewing various descriptions of structured programs, I found little consensus. Thus I would like to clarify the characteristic of structure. To be considered structured, a program requires two components: clearly defined content and a clearly designated mode of presentation. One example of a structured secondary program is the <u>Action</u> program (Scholastic, 1970).

Action is a commercially produced, systematically arranged set of stories, plays, and exercises written for secondary students reading at the second-to-third grade level.

The core of Action is a set of three unit books through which the student proceeds in sequence, each successive book reinforcing previously taught material and adding incremental amounts of new material. The majority of skills work is included in these unit books. In addition to the unit books, the program includes (a) a short story anthology, (b) an anthology of short plays, (c) a set of high interest, easy reading novels for free reading, (d) ditto masters for supplementary skills exercises, and (e) a long-playing record which contains stories used for introducing comprehension skills.

The clearly defined content consists of a carefully controlled vocabulary base of 769 words plus a specific projected learned vocabulary of an additional 94. The clearly defined mode of presentation is that these words are to be learned as sight words in the prereading exercises and practiced in the context of short stories and plays. (There is a word attack component in this program, but it is neither well-defined nor well-sequenced.)

Another example of a structured program, but with a phonics focus that is probably familiar to you all is the Sullivan Programmed Reading Series (McGraw-Hill, 1966). The clearly defined content is 3158 words introduced according to sound-symbol relationships in 21 books, and the clearly defined mode of presentation is the programmed method with immediate feedback.

One not so obvious advantage of both these programs and structured programs in general is that both the teacher and the students can be very familiar with the program and derive feelings of success from meeting clearly defined objectives and goals. Let me give one example of the advantage of structure. We are currently running a tutoring program in a Minneapolis junior high school. One of the new seventh-graders in our tutoring program started work on the Graves

Sequence in September. The Graves Sequence (Graves and Graves, 1972) is a structured sight approach to learning the Dale list of 769 basic sight vocabulary in 35 units according to spelling patterns. The student, I shall call him David, decided to complete all 35 units by December. The tutor suggested a more realistic goal-setting of completing the 35 units by February or March, using an eighth grader who had done just that the previous year as a model. David quickly agreed and is now progressing satisfactorily toward that goal. He knows the program, knows what is expected of him, and feels confident that he can succeed at those expectations.

Recent research also testifies to the value of structure. In a review of the effectiveness of tutoring on pupil achievement, Rosenshine and Furst (1969) noted that only 5 of 14 tutoring programs evaluated were successful in advancing cognitive skills. This indicated that individual attention alone does not guarantee pupil achievement. The review also suggested that the critical variable in the programs was the actual program content. A field test of programmed tutoring by Ellson, Harris & Barber, (1968) equated tutors on time, training, and content. This program controlled the tutor's behavior--as opposed with the tutee's behavior--with ten specific teaching procedures. Test results suggest that the programmed or structured characteristic which provided for a consistent mode of presentation with dictated branching at error points was the critical variable. A more recent successful tutoring study of adolescents by Graves and Patberg, (1976) used university students as tutors using the structured sight programs mentioned above: the Graves Sequence and Action followed by Double Action (1973). The program was individualized as needed by varying the rate at which students progressed, not the content or instructional procedures. Post-test results indicated that 9 out of 10 adolescents severely handicapped in reading made marked progress over a

period of nine months.

A larger study of 425 adolescent boys was done by Aaron, Call, and Muench (1975). They found that a structured worksheet listing objectives, materials, and directions worked significantly better than the traditional basal reader approach with small group instruction.

Another study (Nelson & Peoples, 1975) used paraprofessionals with either the Sullivan programmed materials or a variety of teaching materials. Again the results favored the highly structured approach. Although many of the above studies relied on the sight approach, some studies such as Ellson, Harris and Barber (1968) have combined both the phonics and sight approach while other structured programs such as Harrison's Structured Tutoring build on a heavily phonics orientation. These studies strongly suggest that students learn more within the limits of a well-defined, structured program. When desired content-to-be-learned is clear, when the desired outcomes are clear, programs provide a frame of reference and structure for both students and teacher.

Embedded, then, within the plea for structure is a plea for specificity in teaching reading. Goals stated as helping Johnny "become a better reader" are much too general and unmeasurable. On the other hand, the building of a specific sight vocabulary, the building of specific comprehension skills, and the reading of specific books and stories provide for measurable results. All these specifics make success both apparent and enjoyable.

The second characteristic of ideal remedial reading programs is <u>involvement</u>. This characteristic is rooted in a strong tradition of educational thought. Dewey, Skinner, Bruner, and Piaget have each stressed the importance and necessity for students to be actively involved in the learning process. Widespread acceptance of this need for active involvement has manifested itself in the myriad of motivational activities that are provided in most

reading programs. The assumption is that if the student is motivated, certain self-learning strategies and processes will be "turned on" or activated.

A recent paper by Rosenshine (1976) reviewing research on basic skills instruction at the elementary level focused on two variables basic to student involvement. One of these variables is content-covered; the other is attention. These two variables have recently been combined into a concept designated as "academic engaged time" by Berliner and others at the Far West Laboratory (1976). Academic engaged time is defined as "the time a student spends engaged in academically relevant materials of a moderate level of difficulty."

In a review on the variable of student attention alone, Bloom (1976) reviewed 15 research studies and found consistent correlations (.40 and .50) between student attention and student gain. It is important to note that a broad band of materials including texts, workbooks, and individualized instructional materials yielded positive correlations, but that no non-academic activity yielded positive correlation with reading and math achievement.

If the results of these research reviews are to be accepted, what are the implications for remedial reading programs? If academic engaged time is proven to be a critical variable in student gain and achievement; then it is clear that instructional activities and settings that promote, increase and maximize academic engaged time must be developed and used.

One major teaching approach to increasing academic engaged time is tutoring. Tutoring programs can employ community tutors, university tutors, cross-age, or peer tutors. The primary advantage of any tutoring situation is that both the tutor and the tutee are actively engaged -- usually with reading material. If the tutee bogs down, the tutor is there to respond

and to provide guidance and material to insure both student attention and student learning. In addition, the second aspect of academic engaged time--that of insuring academically relevant material at a moderate level of difficulty can also be specifically assured. The reading materials and skills can be prescribed on an individual basis.

One example of peer tutoring is Rosenbaum's peer-mediated instruction (1973). As with other tutoring methods, this approach requires attention by each person in the pair. I will briefly provide an example of this peer-tutoring as it specifically addresses the problem of how unskilled students can perform in a tutoring situation. This example of spelling practice in a peer-tutoring situation is taken directly from a city-wide elementary project in Jackson, Mississippi (Rosenbaum, 1973). The top of Figure One shows the tutor's material which is a list of spelling words and sentences. There is room at the top for both the tutor's, and tutee's name. The tutor records his name, his buddy's (the tutee's) name, and then proceed to read first the word green, the sentence and repeat the word green.

The lower half of Figure One shows the tutee's spelling responses. He first writes grean, and the tutor notes that the answer is correct up to the letter a, makes a slash, and draws a line through the rest. The tutee tries again, and again the tutor indicates the place of error. After these two tries, the tutor writes the word correctly. The pair continues to the next word, and then returns to the word green to try again later.

With some adaptation this peer-tutoring approach can be used in a secondary remedial reading lab. Students all need sight vocabulary review, need practice reading to others and with others, and need practice in skills and free reading. The key to allowing an unskilled student to act

as a tutor is simply to provide him with whatever information he needs to give feedback to the tutee. For example, for a flash card vocabulary review session, the student who will be acting as the tutor, checks to see if he knows all the words. If he doesn't he asks the other student for whom these cards are review.

Another example may clarify how an unskilled tutor can work. As I was observing a peer-tutoring session early this spring, the tutee, I'll call him John, came to the word probably. John, not knowing the word probably, sounded it out prō-bāb-ly. He looked up, puzzled, said, "Gee, I can't think of a sentence to go with the prō-bāb-ly. The tutor, having himself forgotten the word probably, said, "Well, we'll mark that for review." Then, the tutor marks the item for review, and checks with the teacher before he sees his tutee again.

This approach, while not the epitome of efficiency, provides for involvement and responsibility.

The third characteristic of an ideal remedial reading program is acceptance. The proliferation of self-help books over the last years testifies to the recent widespread interest in self-acceptance and self-knowledge. Consider such books as I'm O.K., You're O.K. (Harris, 1969), On Becoming a Person (Rogers, 1961), and Passages (Sheehy, 1977).

A recent IRA publication by Quandt (1972) summarizes the literature on the relationship of self-concept to reading. Quandt makes a useful distinction between a person's global self-concept and a person's reading self-concept. Some of the students in a remedial reading program have low reading self-concepts but rather high global self-concepts. These students view themselves as capable, likeable individuals despite their reading problems. One of our tutees, I'll call him Chris, demonstrates this combination of a high global self-concept but low reading self-concept.

In the fall of 1976, Chris was placed in a one-on-one tutoring situation which accepted him totally, including his inability to read even second grade material. This situation freed him from pressure to perform beyond his capabilities and provided the level of material and structure necessary for him to begin finding success in reading. One of my most exciting moments last fall was to walk into the reading room and find Chris engrossed in a Sprint magazine. Needless to say, Chris is not out of the woods altogether, but he's at least on the right path.

Another of our students, I'll call him Peter, has the more difficult combination of a low global self-concept combined with a low reading self-concept. I wish I could tell a similar "success" story here, but as Peter is as yet unable to accept himself and his reading problem, progress has been slow. He is still saving face by making no effort, proving to himself again that self-fulfilling prophecy that he can't become a good reader.

Structuring a remedial reading program to include many successes and opportunities for students to feel positive about their reading, their ideas, and their interests will provide an atmosphere of acceptance which will contribute to the development of positive self-concepts.

To summarize then, the three characteristics I see as essential to an ideal remedial reading program are structure, involvement, and acceptance. (SIA). The structure provides a plan for the student and teacher; involvement requires that the student be an active participant in the plan; acceptance provides for student understanding with the expectation of success.

Let us advance now to the second section of the paper: consideration of the content and materials of remedial programs.

This section should provide ideas on how to incorporate the previous characteristics into an ongoing program. The content of an ideal remedial program consists of a well-balanced curriculum of vocabulary, comprehension, and free-reading materials. Some of the questions that naturally follow are: Which vocabulary is to be learned? Which comprehension skills are to be learned? How are they to be learned? Which free-reading materials will be emphasized?

First, let me propose an example to the question of which vocabulary should be learned. Vocabulary skills for the secondary remedial students should build cumulatively from the Dale List of 769 Easy Words (Dale, 1931) through the Dale list of 3,000 familiar words (Dale and Chall, 1948), and the Harris-Jacobson Basic Elementary Reading Vocabulary of 5,617 words. This approach is based on the fact that a relatively small number of words account for the majority of words in reading material. For example, Bond and Tinker (1967) estimate that the Dolch list of 220 words comprises 60% of the words in intermediate grade material.

Now just how should this designated vocabulary be taught? About the only available consensus on vocabulary teaching is that it should be taught directly and not incidentally (Petty, Herold and Stoll, 1968) and that it should be taught in context (Goodman, 1967, Smith, 1976) to preserve and utilize the meaning of the surrounding words. In the secondary program referred to above (Graves and Graves, 1972) the necessary vocabulary is introduced and practiced initially in a list, but after two to five minutes of practice, the words are practiced in sentence, paragraph and story context. Flash cards are used for quick reviews lasting two-three minutes on succeeding days. The goal is for these words to be practiced until they are automatic to the students (LaBerge and Samuels, 1974). Little time is spent teaching the meanings of new words as most secondary students

understand the vocabulary orally once they recognize it visually.

What about comprehension skills? Which comprehension skills should be taught? The range of comprehension skills have been organized into various taxonomies such as Bloom's (1956), Barrett's (in Clymer, 1968) and Herber's (1970). These comprehenion taxonomies usually start with the literal comprehension skills, and move through the inferencing skills to critical skills. Barrett's taxonomy, for example, has five levels: literal, reorganizational, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative. Although the emphasis in most remedial programs is the literal level of comprehension, direct instruction on the other levels is also necessary.

For an example of teaching specific comprehension skills at the literal level, let us consider for a moment the oft-repeated instruction to a reader, "read for sequence." Just what does this mean in terms of the way in which a student must process that passage? What does the student look for in reading for sequence? How does he go about it?

One method for teaching sequence that could be adapted for various comprehension skills is the "time word underlining method." Each student needs a copy of consumable material such as Know Your World, Action, or Sprint magazine. As the students are reading, ask them to watch for time words, or time phrases. Time words and phrases are words such as first, last, then, after a while, at nine o'clock. Before the students begin reading, solicit some examples from the students, writing the words as given on the board. After the reading ask the students to skim over it and underline the time words they found. Then they can compare and share the results and discuss the sequence. Note the amount of visual processing and skimming that is occurring in this task. (Note also the specificity of the task and the resulting success.) Also students can easily progress

from time words to time phrases, and eventually to time sentences and paragraphs.

What of the free reading in reading classes? The purpose of the free reading component of any remedial program is to structure explicit opportunities for students to begin reading for enjoyment and to thus build a transfer from reading in school to reading at home. Only if outside reading becomes a fact, will true improvement occur. Three suggestions for encouraging free reading follow: 1) make it a requirement for a certain grade, 2) institute a teacher-reading time in class to help broaden interests, and 3) incorporate a free reading time in the class for the student.

To conclude this section, an ideal remedial program plans for a balanced content of vocabulary development, comprehension skill development and free-reading growth with specific, measurable objectives and well-defined methods.

In this third and final section, I will present a few models of an instructional week. Please note that the material I have chosen are to be considered as examples. Other materials will naturally be appropriate if they allow for the structure and specificity discussed above. These models, I will present three, are based on a five day week, 45 minute instructional period.

This first model (Figure 2) uses the Action program as the base program, supplemented by various individuals skills materials, high-interest low-readability magazines, and free-reading materials.

The Action program is designed here as a teacher-directed, class or small group activity. Note that the plan provides for three lessons a week on Action; on Monday and Wednesday this program is followed by peer tutoring of vocabulary review and small group reading. Tuesday and Thursday begins with the teacher reading to the students; on Tuesday

an Action lesson follows; on Thursday, individualized skills. The materials for the individualized component consist of the range of lab materials, workbooks, and tapes that are available. Some of the more structured of these materials are Reading for Concepts, Clue Magazines and tapes, and Dr. Spello. On Friday there is group work with the current newspapers and magazines mentioned above, followed by a free reading time of Pal paperbacks, or other selections from the wide variety of high-interest materials.

The second model (Figure 3) has many points in common with the first model; the main difference is that community tutors are available for tutoring with structured materials suchas Ellson's, Harrison's or Graves's programs. The plan for Tuesday and Thursday is for teacher reading followed by individualized prescribed instruction and Friday's plan is the same.

The third model (Figure 4) again is similar in structure. The major difference here is that Mondays and Wednesdays start with peer tutoring on Double Action words and materials, followed by a Double Action lesson. The other days, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, follow the same pattern as before.

Notice further that each of these models can be overlaid on the other, providing for subgrouping within a larger group with minor adaptations.

In summary, an ideal remedial program is a structured program with clearly defined content and modes of presentation. Such a program incorporates and provides for student involvement to increase academic engaged time and feedback. Student acceptance is complete, but expectations clear and success guaranteed.

The content is balanced over vocabulary, comprehension, and free-reading development; the goals are specific and attainable for both teacher

and student.

With these ideals as guidelines, perhaps we can joyfully and with confidence share our enthusiasm for the written word.

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Figure 1

Example of a peer tutoring spelling lesson

Tutor's material:

MY NAME IS _____ LESSON 1

MY BUDDY IS _____ DATE _____

☐ green Mrs. Turtle wore a green shell. green

☐ weed Robert wants to let the weed grow. weed

☐ teeth Without teeth, I wouldn't have fun eating. teeth

Tutee's answer sheet:

MY NAME IS _____ LESSON NUMBER _____

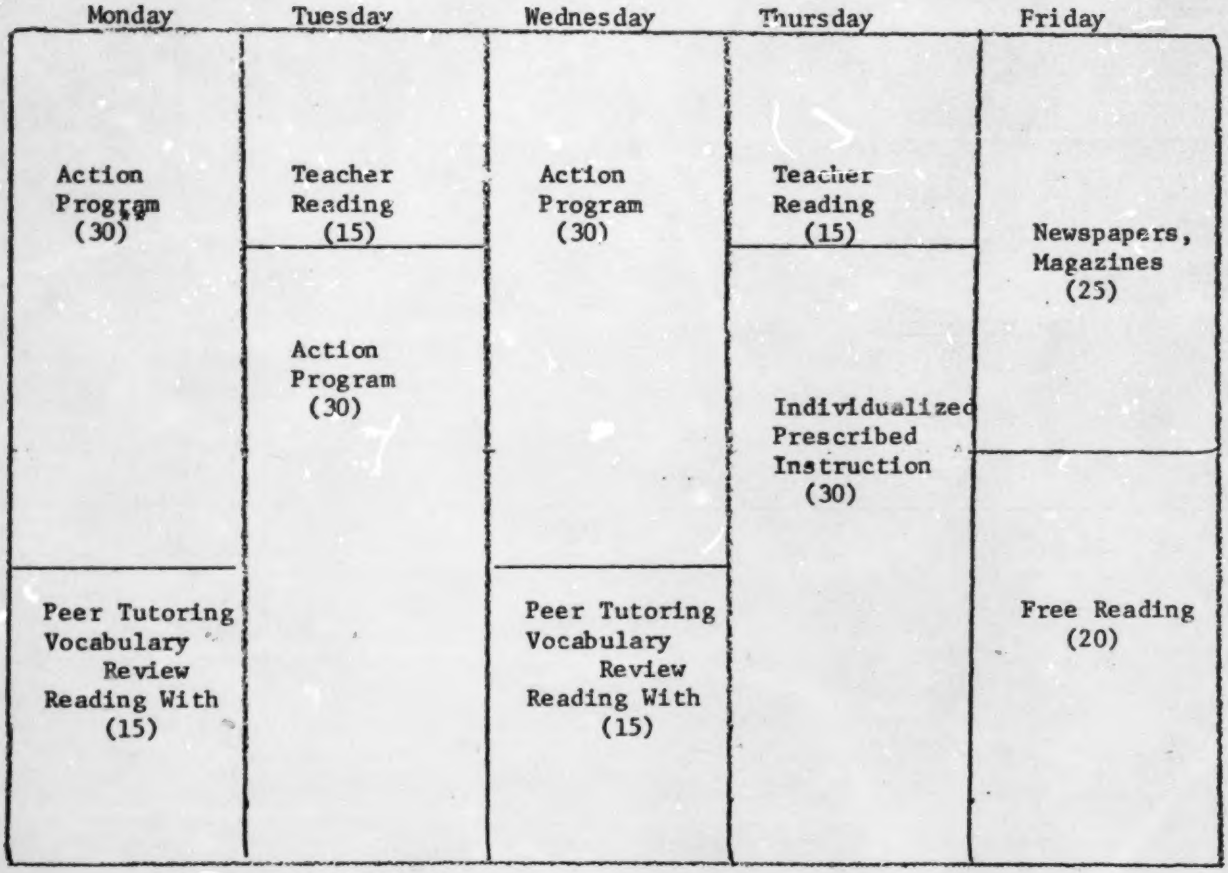
MY BUDDY IS _____ DATE _____

1. ~~gre/an~~ ~~are/ne~~ green	6.	11.
2.	7.	12.
3.	8.	13.
4.	9.	14.
5.	10.	15.

From Rosenbaum, Peter S. Peer-mediated instruction. New York: Teachers College Press, 1973.

Figure 2

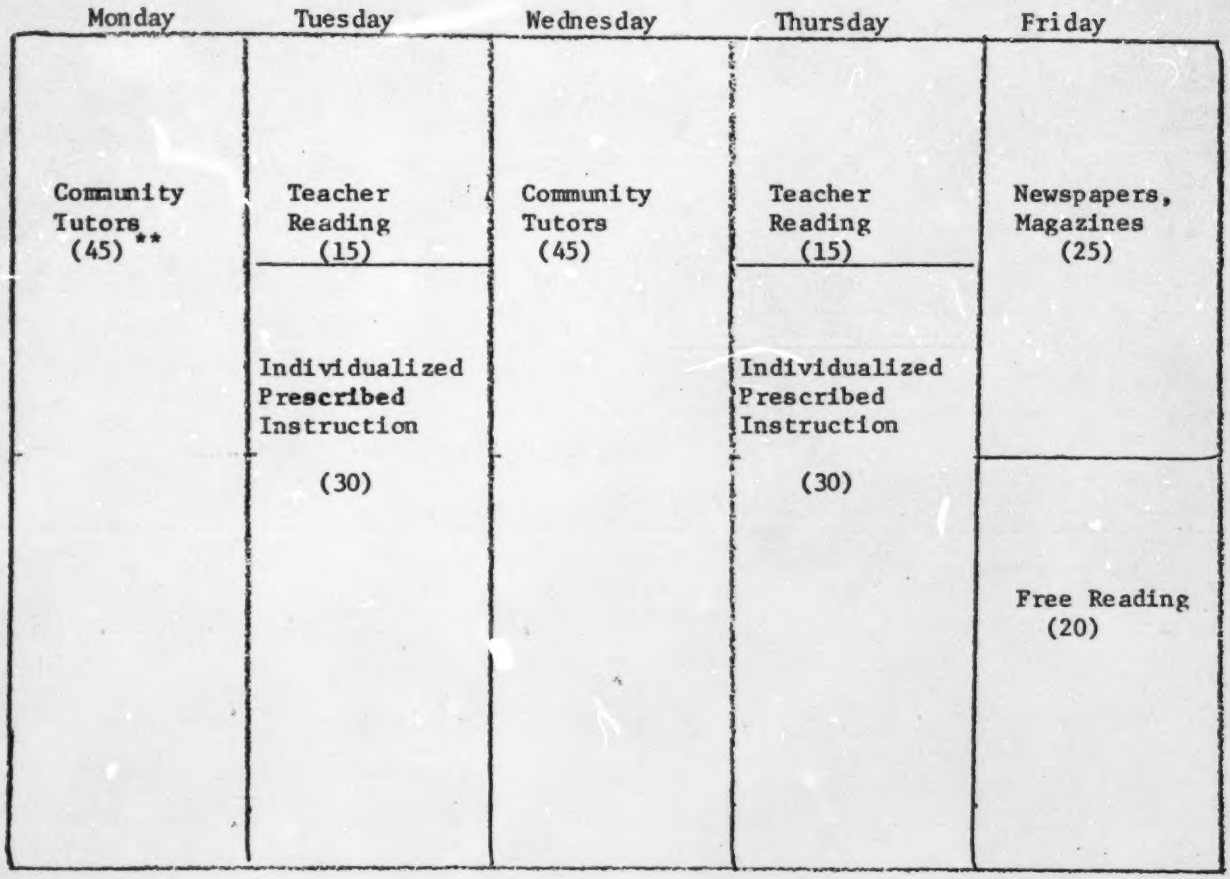
Model of an Instructional Week



** Numbers in parentheses indicate minutes, postulating a 45 minute instructional period.

Figure 3

Model of an instructional week



** Numbers in parentheses indicate minutes, postulating a 45 minute instructional period.

Figure 4

Model of an instructional week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Peer Tutoring (15)**	Teacher Reading (15)	Peer Tutoring (15)	Teacher Reading (15)	Newspapers, Magazines (25)
Double Action (30)	Individualized Prescribed Instruction (30)	Double Action (30)	Individualized Prescribed Instruction (30)	Free Reading (20)

**Numbers in parentheses indicate minutes, postulating a 45 minute instructional period.